

Guidelines for Modified Office Occupancy



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IMPORTANT NOTICE

TO: All Members of Congress and Staff

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Chief Administrative Officer

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DATE: June 15, 2020

SUBJECT: **Recommended Occupancy Levels and Guidance for Improving Office Workspaces**

At the direction of the Committee on House Administration, the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) and the Office of Attending Physician (OAP) have developed guidance and services to assist offices with safely occupying staff workspaces. As a reminder, all offices should continue telework to the maximum degree possible and only occupy the workspace when necessary. This guidance is designed to provide the information necessary to help Members make informed decisions about their workplace and on-campus staffing levels.

The guidance includes:

- [Recommended occupancy levels to maintain social distancing](#)
- [Plexiglass and other barriers for use in your workspaces](#)
- [Consultation services to improve your workspace](#)

The House has several thousand individual workspaces located in several buildings across the Capitol complex. While we endeavor to provide all offices with the required services as soon as possible, the immediate priority will be Committee, Leadership, and other offices with pressing legislative activity requiring the presence of staff on campus. As a reminder, [on June 8, 2020, the House Sergeant at Arms](#), in consultation with the Attending Physician, extended access limitations throughout the Capitol Complex until June 30, 2020, or until an assessment of prevailing community pandemic health conditions allows for access restrictions to begin to be lifted. This guidance includes a number of specific limitations on visitors that offices must continue to follow. Members are also advised to monitor unique local conditions that may affect district operations and to consult with the OAP about any questions they may have.

Building occupants should continue with frequent hand washing, frequent use of hand sanitizer, and disinfecting high-touch areas with sanitizing wipes. Maintaining six feet between staffers/workstations and the continued use of face coverings are also strongly recommended, consistent with previous guidance. Please review the [Social Distancing Guidelines](#) on the [Office of Attending Physician website](#).

In addition, on Friday, [June 12, 2020, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\) issued updated guidance](#) "for ways to resume some daily activities as safely as possible." That guidance notes that, "In general, the more closely you interact with others and the longer that interaction, the higher the risk of COVID-19 spread." Accordingly, it includes a series of questions you should ask before engaging in various activities, including about how many people you will interact with, your

ability to maintain social distancing, and the amount of time you will spend interacting with others. It also notes, “Being in a group with people who aren’t social distancing or wearing a cloth face covering increases your risks.”

Recommended Occupancy Levels

The Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) has developed recommended maximum occupancy levels for typical Member office floorplans in consultation with the Office of Attending Physician (OAP) and the Architect of the Capitol (AOC). These [standard floorplan layouts are available on HouseNet](#).

The recommended occupancy levels are a conservative interpretation of OAP guidelines and typically yield one employee in the reception areas, two in the Chief of Staff space, and three in the large staff office. Your office may differ from these standard layouts. While the CAO does not have standard layouts for Leadership, Committee, and support offices, [occupying every other desk](#) for most office layouts would yield similar results to maintain six-foot separation between employees. Although offices should endeavor to continue telework to the greatest degree, and only occupy the workspace when necessary, the CAO can provide an [occupancy consultation](#) for nonstandard layouts upon request. The CAO will be able to accommodate a limited number of appointments each week.

We recognize, depending on legislative activities, that offices may need to exceed recommended occupancy levels. Furthermore, these occupancy levels do not account for visitors to the workspace. Exceeding the recommended occupancy levels will require individuals to wear face coverings in the workspace and continued adherence to the OAP social distancing guidelines.

Plexiglass and Other Barriers for Office Spaces

Plexiglass barriers are one example discussed in the social distancing guidelines to reduce the risk of virus exposure to forward-facing, customer service staff. The CAO has purchased several hundred plexiglass barriers of various types that will be offered to D.C. offices at no cost. Demand is likely to exceed supply for at least the next few weeks and possibly longer. Priority will be given to Committees with legislative activity, offices without modular furniture, and other offices with an immediate, pressing need.

You can review the [plexiglass options available on HouseNet](#) and order your desired option via the [Furniture Catalog and Delivery MyServiceRequest](#). All offices that submit a request will receive at least two barriers as soon as possible this month. We will review all other orders and address outstanding demand in an equitable manner.

As a reminder, the Committee on House Administration has determined that expenses related to the purchase and/or installation of plexiglass or similar barriers in both Washington D.C. and district offices is a reimbursable expense. Please contact CAO Financial Counseling at (202) 225-7474 with questions on how to voucher these expenses.

Office Consultations to Improve Your Workspace

The Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) and the Office of Attending Physician (OAP) have developed consultation services to help you improve the safety of your workspace. This includes guidance on deployment of barriers, position of furniture, traffic flows, and other recommendations to improve your office. To request a safety consultation, please submit an [Office Workspace Consultation request](#). The CAO endeavors to complete all consultations by mid-summer. Priority will be given to offices with a pressing need to occupy their office.

Offices are encouraged to review the “[Social Distancing Office Layout Checklist](#)” for recommendations they can apply to their workspace. Many of the recommendations do not require any special training to implement. Offices may submit a [MyServiceRequest to have furniture moved within the office](#) or [to have furniture removed from the office](#). Please also review [the packet of signage](#) for display as appropriate in your office to assist with social distancing.

The Architect of the Capitol (AOC) has taken appropriate action to adjust the heating and air conditioning for your workspace in line with OAP guidance. The AOC appreciates your patience and understanding of fluctuations in temperature and humidity controls as they work to provide you with the safest possible workspace. Should you have HVAC issues, please request assistance from the House Office Building Service Center at (202) 225-4141 or by visiting: www.aoc.gov/service-requests.

If you have any questions about the services and guidance described in this memorandum, please contact CAO First Call at (202) 225-8000.

